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New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also extend my appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his effective leadership during his presidency.

The heinous terrorists attacks of 11 September have undeniably transformed international relations. The United Nations is called upon to reinforce its primary role as the standard bearer of the principles that will shape the new environment and unite humanity in the pursuit of justice, tolerance, the dignity of human beings, respect for human rights, the promotion of peace and zero-tolerance for the dark forces of terrorism.

On behalf of the Government and people of Cyprus, I reiterate our deep condolences and sympathy to the American people for the tragic loss of innocent lives caused by the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September. We unreservedly condemn these barbaric acts, which we consider to be attacks against the values and principles of humanity.

The community of nations must individually and collectively take concerted and resolute action against terrorism. We believe that there is no justification or excuse for terrorism and, at the same time, we reject any notion of linking this scourge with any particular religious faith or ethnic group. We renew our commitment to implement fully Security Council resolutions on terrorism, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Cyprus is actively participating in the common effort. It has ratified or acceded to nine of the 12 international conventions pertaining to international terrorism. Furthermore, we expect an early ratification of the most recent Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which is already before the House of Representatives.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus approved on 20 September a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of a task force to combat international terrorism.

The United Nations continues to be faced with old and new tasks: globalization, good governance, protection of the environment and the need for sustainable development. The elimination of poverty and pandemics, securing a world free from the threat of

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weapons of mass destruction and maintaining international peace and security remain high on the agenda. That is why we consider it imperative and the duty of each and every Member to provide the necessary resources and support to our Organization.

Cyprus strongly supports the implementation of the commitments we undertook last year in the Millennium Declaration. We also advocate the strengthening and rationalization of the United Nations system, and we welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to strive for a better and more just world. We congratulate him on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, which is well-deserved recognition of the central role of the United Nations and a tribute to its achievements, as well as to his personal devotion and commitment.

At the beginning of this new millennium, we have a special obligation to place new emphasis on the promotion and the protection of human rights and the defeat of terrorism.

However, the adoption of declarations and legal instruments in the area of human rights is not enough. We need to make accountable those violators of human rights and decisively strike at the culture of impunity. This is why Cyprus strongly supports the early entry into force of the International Criminal Court.

We are also deeply concerned with the increasing number and scope of humanitarian emergencies leading to an ever-rising number of refugees and internally displaced persons. The plight of these unfortunate people merits special attention and coordinated action.

The tragic events of 11 September have highlighted the need to continue and accelerate efforts to prevent and resolve regional conflicts. The inability of the international community to put an end to the unacceptable situation in the Middle East undermines the credibility of the system of collective security. Cyprus, as a neighbouring country with close relations to the peoples of the region, is particularly pained by the continuing cycle of violence, the tragic loss of innocent human lives and the plight of the Palestinian population.

We look forward to a region living in peace, stability and security for all States, including the State of Israel. We reiterate our support for the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the creation of their own State. We urge both parties to work immediately towards finding ways to put an end to this cycle of violence and to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We consider the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report as an absolutely necessary first step in this direction. Cyprus reiterates its long-held position for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We follow the situation in the Balkans with particular interest. Cyprus supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on Kosovo. We hope that the forces of peace and reconciliation will prevail and welcome the recent positive developments in the country. We support respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right of return of refugees and the return of property of displaced persons, and the principle of the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

Resolution of the Cyprus problem is long overdue. I cannot conceal my deep disappointment, shared by the Security Council in its statement to the Press of 26 September, at the refusal of the Turkish side to continue with the proximity talks to help the Secretary-General's efforts to find a comprehensive settlement. The refusal of Turkish Cypriot leader Mr. Denktash, with the support of Ankara, to resume the talks that he abandoned a year ago, despite the official invitation extended by the Secretary-General in September, is particularly disturbing.

The Secretary-General is now trying to invigorate the process of negotiation. Therefore, in order to facilitate the Secretary-General's effort, I will refrain from making remarks that normally I would have made, other than to identify the reason for the failure to make progress, which is the lack of political will on the part of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash.

The Turkish side has abandoned the concept of a *bi-zonal, bi-communal federal Cyprus, which* Security Council resolutions have provided as the basis for the solution. The Turkish side is also calling the international community to accept the so-called realities, which is the legalization of Turkey's occupation of 37 per cent of Cypriot territory, in breach of international law, the forceful expulsion of Greek Cypriot refugees from the occupied area and the subsequent importation of 120,000 settlers from mainland Turkey in an effort to change the

demographic character of Cyprus. As is well known, the international community, through a plethora of United Nations resolutions, has repeatedly rejected this policy. Acceptance of these so-called realities would create a very dangerous precedent in international affairs, striking at the very heart of the cherished principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I would like to refer to the purely humanitarian problem of missing persons, the resolution of which remains one of the most pressing issues for the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and for all Cypriots.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, I must once again report to you that the agreement on missing persons of 31 July 1997 between Mr. Rauf Denktash and myself, providing for the exchange of information and for information on the location of graves of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot missing persons, has not been implemented because of the continuing negative attitude of the Turkish side. We appeal again to the Government of Turkey to show the necessary political will in order to bring a final solution to this tragic humanitarian issue and abide by the 10 May 2001 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights.

In the face of current difficulties, we do not despair. Our vision for Cyprus is a departure from the passions of the past. History is often described as the best teacher of wise men. We see as the future of our country: a reunited federal State, member of the European Union, with human and other rights of each and every citizen fully protected under the process of democracy and the rule of law. We see a State with a single citizenship, sovereignty and international personality, a demilitarized State enjoying the fruits of its labours in the wider European family, while at the same time playing its rightful role in our immediate region of the Eastern Mediterranean.

I recommend to the leadership of Turkey that it abandon its threats to annex the occupied part of Cyprus. I urge them to consider the obvious advantages of the solution of the Cyprus problem for stability in our region, the consolidation of the Greco-Turkish rapprochement and the promotion of Turkey's aspirations to join the process of European integration.

I urge the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, to join me in sharing the vision of a Cyprus too small to be divided but huge for the common prosperity of all its inhabitants. I urge him to look to the future and not to the past, to listen to the increasingly desperate voices of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots and stop placing obstacles, at each turn, to the good offices of the Secretary-General for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

It is noteworthy that the economic prospects for a post-settlement Cyprus are truly impressive. This growth will be even greater for our Turkish Cypriot compatriots, who are currently suffering because of the dire political and economic situation in the occupied area. Tragically, almost 50 per cent have been forced to take the cruel road of emigration. The Turkish Cypriots will benefit considerably from the accession of our country to the European Union.

I urge Mr. Denktash to realize that he and I are not getting any younger and that we owe it to the younger generations of Cypriots to do away with the walls of division. For my part, I reiterate my readiness to engage in the process of negotiations with the necessary political will and good faith for finding a fair and viable solution based on the United Nations resolutions, meeting the legitimate interests of all Cypriots.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mesić *(spoke in Croatian; English text provided by the delegation)*: I wanted to come here, and I had to come here. I thought it was necessary to show that I will not allow those fanatic killers, who

may be secretly lurking right now, to prevent me from presenting the general views of my country, the Republic of Croatia, about the current situation in the world in front of this audience in the United Nations.

This year, the general debate is taking place later than usual. The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington postponed the scheduled autumn session. I emphasize the word "postponed". The terrorists did not manage to paralyse the United States of America. They did not manage to stop the work of the United Nations; nor will the world's statesmen cancel their visits to New York and their participation in the work of the General Assembly.

Since 11 September, when as if in a nightmare we were faced with the horror of global terrorism, it has been repeatedly said by many people, including myself, that the world is no longer the same. I am here today to repeat this, and also to add a few more words. It is true, or at least it seems to be true, that the terrorist attacks, which left thousands of deaths behind, have changed everything. However, the truth is slightly different: much has changed as a result of the attacks, but nothing has changed in the area that made it possible for the attacks to be committed.

I would therefore like to stress the following points. In order to make sure that the terror experienced by New York and Washington will not happen again, we — I repeat, we — have to change the world completely.

Today we live with the threat of global terrorism, and the global response to it. With regard to the nature of this first big war of the twenty-first century, I can only repeat what I recently mentioned in my speech in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. This is not a clash of civilizations; this is not a clash of cultures; this is not a conflict of religions. This is just a confrontation of civilization and non-civilization.

I would also like to be very clear about something else. There is no such thing as "our" or "their" terrorism. There is no justified or unjustified terrorism. It is in the nature of terrorism, regardless of whether it is masked by an ideology, religion or war of liberation, to kill innocent people — the more, the better. Terrorism is therefore absolutely unacceptable, and this is why we are fighting against it today.

We have created a broad anti-terrorist coalition, an alliance of countries not previously known in history, which can only be compared to the anti-fascist coalition at the time of the Second World War. This anti-terrorist coalition is almost an alliance of the civilized world, a defence response of that world to the challenge and threat of destruction and anarchy. I would like to stress two things with respect to the response and the circumstances in which it is taking place.

First, today we are not faced with the dilemma of choosing between anarchy imposed upon us by the terrorists, on the one hand, and autocracy, which some could perhaps see as the only efficient response to global terrorism on the other. To accept that dilemma would be fatal for our civilization. The response is, and can only be, democracy and the rule of law. The defence of democracy must not turn it into its very opposite, even under the conditions of war imposed upon us by the terrorists.

Secondly, the establishment of the anti-terrorist coalition represents the beginning of profound and far-reaching changes on the world political scene. I am speaking about changes in relations between countries or groups of countries. I am also speaking about changes in the nature and way of functioning of international alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as existing international organizations like the United Nations and those organizations that are just emerging, of which the International Criminal Court is one example.

However, while we are still combating global terrorism using our military, political and economic force and intelligence organizations, we must start looking for answers to the following questions: What is global terrorism and what makes it possible? It is not enough to defeat the terrorists we are faced with today. We have to do everything we can to make sure that we shall not be dealing with new terrorists tomorrow. This is the second level of change that needs to be carried out, but that is not yet being made. I view the situation as follows.

It will not be difficult to encourage fanatic behaviour in both individuals and large groups of people — thus turning them into ruthless killers or terrorists — as long as famine, poverty and non-development are present in large parts of the world, and as long as people anywhere suffer from inequality and the absence of freedom as a result of unresolved regional crises. I therefore think that we have to change

the world completely, if we do not want our present fight against global terrorism and our victory over it, of which I have no doubt, to be mere episodes.

That might sound too ambitious or even a bit utopian, but I believe it is neither of the two. I am sure that, in addition to the fight against terrorism, there is another task ahead of us that is no less difficult or responsible, namely, creating and implementing a global strategy for solving accumulated problems of today's world, problems that did not appear only yesterday. Many of them have been discussed under the dome of the General Assembly. Many beautiful words have been said. It is now time to turn those words into actions. It is now time for those actions to stop ugly, abominable words full of hatred and hostility from turning into new acts of madness such as the ones we saw in this city. We have a common interest: life in peace and safety for all. Let us have a common goal, too: a life of dignity for all. Neither can be achieved tomorrow everywhere, but both can be achieved everywhere.

I would like this session of the United Nations General Assembly to reaffirm this world Organization as an irreplaceable instrument in the struggle for a different and better world. I would like this session to show the political will of all Member States to start seeking together — and finding — in a sincere and coordinated way, solutions to problems that, in the context of the threat of global terrorism, prove to be literally unavoidable.

Let us not forget that in September the terrorists used planes full of passengers in order to kill thousands of people. The next time they may use chemical, biological or, perhaps, even nuclear weapons to kill hundreds of thousands of people. Let us also not forget that this Organization was founded to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". There is no time to lose. Let us change the world we live in so as to be able to continue to live.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Ángel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President González Macchi (*spoke in Spanish*): As I begin my statement in the general debate, allow me to express to you, Mr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the pleasure of my delegation at seeing you preside over the work of this session of the General Assembly. Your personal and professional qualities, with which we are familiar, will ensure the success of our work. Your election is also recognition of the sisterly Republic of Korea, a country with which we have close links of cooperation and friendship. You can be sure of the steadfast and determined support of the delegation of Paraguay as you carry out your duties.

Likewise, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the work being done by the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan, who was recently honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize for his dedication to the cause of the United Nations, which is peace itself. We are certain that under his leadership, the efforts of the United Nations will reach all peoples and the Organization will adapt itself to the new reality and important challenges imposed on us by the context of international politics.

Allow me today, two months after the tragic and condemnable events of 11 September, to reiterate the solidarity of my Government and of the people of the Republic of Paraguay with the Government and people of the United States and state our unswerving commitment to the fight against terrorism in all its manifestations. The Republic of Paraguay is not neutral in the face of such a cowardly crime, and it will continue to support all the efforts of this Organization and the international community to put a definitive end to these crimes against humanity. We must not confine ourselves exclusively to demonstrations of solidarity

and condemnation. We must make definite commitments to the international consensus that has been built in order to face this grave threat to humanity.

This general debate is taking place in circumstances that would have been unimaginable to us and that have reminded us of our vulnerability to individuals and groups of individuals that commit indiscriminate violent acts that are totally unjustified in the minds or feelings of civilized human beings. We must also recall that the theme of international terrorism has been on our Organization's agenda since the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and since then to date we have not been sufficiently diligent in taking the legal and collective security measures necessary to prevent events such as those we are belatedly regretting

The urgent fight against terrorism in all its manifestations, which should not be interpreted as a clash of civilizations or of religious beliefs, is the top priority on our international agenda, and we cannot assert that any country is free of the danger posed by international terrorism. Rarely in history have there been such grave challenges to international peace and security like the one we face today — a fact which forces us take clear and firm positions that are in keeping with the provisions of the Charter and the prevailing norms of international law. Not only is international security at stake today, but so is the democratic system itself, which represents victory and universal good in its constant aspiration to and struggle for freedom and justice.

Immediately after these events, my Government strengthened internal measures required by the circumstances so as to be able to exercise greater control and security over movements into and out of the country, while respecting the principle of the free movement of persons.

Mindful of its responsibility and consistent with the commitment made as a Member of this Organization, the Republic of Paraguay, by a decree of the executive branch of 24 October 2001, established an inter-ministerial commission to implement resolution 1373 (2001), recently adopted by the Security Council. The Republic's judicial and legislative branches and the Attorney General's office were called on to designate various governmental division representatives. The commission was installed on 6 November 2001, under the coordination of the Ministry for Foreign Relations.

A draft law is also currently under consideration by the judicial branch, which defines and sets penalties for the crime of terrorism, and it enjoys the full support of the executive branch.

On 12 October 2001, Paraguay signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, which is being referred to the National Congress for adoption. The national Government has embarked on constitutional procedures so that the other conventions on this matter to which it is still not a party will be signed and ratified or adhered to as soon as possible.

We also expect the early adoption by the General Assembly of the two conventions on terrorism, which are under discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee created for this purpose in the Sixth Committee. We must not wait for a replay of the events of 11 September in order to accelerate our strengthening of the international legal framework. The time we delay in strengthening our legal framework will be an opportunity for the terrorists to increase their capacity and expand their criminal activities to other countries.

Within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), we have participated with full conviction in deciding on actions and formulating decisions that were recently adopted during the consultative meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

In the context of our regional association — the Common Market Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) — on 28 September 2001, it was decided to undertake the broadest possible cooperation among its members in order to carry out information exchange, studies, concerted actions against terrorist acts and the establishment of an open-ended working group to appraise and devise common policies in the fight against terrorism.

In recent weeks we have experienced once again a new terrorist threat, and I am referring particularly to the use of biological agents, whose effects could reach a planetary level and threaten humanity itself as a whole. This new criminal practice compels us to react as rapidly and energetically as possible and be determined in all our efforts to uncover the perpetrators and their sponsors, who are acting in anonymity.

International concern and actions generated by the events of September must also prompt us to reflect and evaluate other themes of transcendental importance on our agenda, such as the fight against poverty, the need to strengthen international economic cooperation for development, access to markets and information and communication technologies by the developing countries so that the imbalances that still characterize international relations may become less severe.

Achieving the goals set in the Millennium Declaration, along with other commitments entered into in the context of development in the various forums of our Organization, must continue to be one of our greatest and urgent challenges in coming years.

For this reason, we fully concur with the point made by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization that the most difficult battle facing the international community is the eradication of poverty — which is exactly why we must speed up the economic growth of the developing countries. We trust that the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held next year in Monterrey, Mexico, will achieve the desired results. To this end, we believe that consideration must be given to the clear-cut differences among existing levels of development, to the unevenness that prevails in the capacity of countries to participate in international processes and, in this regard, to the special situation of landlocked countries, which, because of the nature of their territory, face greater difficulties in engaging in external trade, thus putting a brake on their economic development.

It is our hope that the final outcome of that Conference will not be confined solely and exclusively to a mere political declaration or expression of wishes. We hope that it will set clear objectives and goals to ensure that the globalization process, rather than widening the existing gap between rich and poor, will promote the development of all nations within an inclusive and equitable framework.

Given the new challenges and changes that have arisen since the beginning of the new millennium, we reaffirm our commitment to the urgent need to strengthen our Organization, underscoring first and foremost the central role that should be played by the General Assembly as the most representative, universal and equitable deliberative organ. We should not allow the General Assembly to become a mere meeting place where we participate in order to fulfil a routine function within a pre-established timetable of work.

Speeding up reform of the Security Council is another of the key aspects in strengthening the United Nations. The Council should become a more democratic, representative and transparent organ so that it can strike a better political balance. This process should provide for an increase in both permanent and non-permanent members, so as to secure a better level of participation for developing countries which, at the present time, are under-represented. Likewise we believe that, in the area of transparency of the Council's activities, it is appropriate to establish interactive machinery involving the other Member States of the Organization so that they will have greater access to the Council's work. For this reason, we have welcomed the briefing meetings that the Chairman of the Special Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is giving to other Members of the Organization.

Another outstanding issue that needs to be resolved by our Organization, and one that gives us utmost concern in view of the recent increase in violence and loss of life, is the situation in the Middle East. We believe that both the General Assembly and the Security Council should redouble their efforts to arrive at a solution that will respond to the rightful aspirations of the parties concerned. It should include recognition of Israel's existence within secure and well-defined borders and the Palestinian people's full enjoyment of the right to have its own homeland. We need to tackle this issue firmly and resolutely, ensuring that we work together with the necessary political will to contribute to international peace and security.

My country, Paraguay, also hopes that other areas of tension in the world may be settled. In this regard, mindful of the principle of universality enshrined in our Charter, we advocate a solution to the question of the Republic of China and Taiwan within the framework of the norms of international law.

The current economic and social state of affairs, and its consequences, obliges us to mobilize efficiently, with the greatest possible degree of responsibility and solidarity, the cooperation required from the developed countries and the international financial institutions to tackle the challenges that we, as leaders, face when we try to create conditions of equal opportunity for paid employment, and when we seek to eliminate income

inequities that undermine social stability, and to provide for basic care and services for our peoples and for the sustainable development of our countries.

In conclusion, we are aware today, more than ever, of the need to begin a process that allows us to work together in a rational way to build a more supportive and participatory new economic world order, the ultimate purpose of which would be to promote development and well-being for all of our peoples, once and for all. In this regard, I wish to express my Government's utter conviction that the current international situation underscores the importance of this process beginning and ending within the sphere of the United Nations, thus ensuring full participation in it of all Member States.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Museveni: There is a lot of talk floating around regarding some catchwords: the "new international order", "globalization", the "global village" and so forth. All of these ebullient, self-gratifying positions are, apparently, due to the end of the cold war between the Western countries and the former Soviet Union. Of course, the end of the dangerous and misguided rivalry between communism and capitalism is welcome and has, indeed, opened some new opportunities, if fully utilized by all concerned.

However, it must be pointed out unequivocally that many of the problems in the world today predate the cold war; they predate the onset of communism in Russia in 1917. The slave trade started in the 1440s along the West African coast. A shift from bleeding Africa through slavery to resident colonialism was ordained in Berlin in 1884. That was long before communism took over in Russia. Therefore the cold war could not have been responsible for these mistakes and for the complications they created, many of which we are still grappling with today, especially in Africa.

Therefore, the euphoria that followed the end of the cold war was not wholly justified. The song about globalization, as I have pointed out repeatedly, is not a new tune at all. Africans were globalized as slaves all over all over the world in the 1440s. My Christian name is Joel, actually a Jewish name, so I am already globalized. Many of my countrymen have got Arab names like Azizi and Musa because they are Muslims. We were globalized long ago in Africa. Unfortunately, though, that globalization movement was parasitic. It was a parasitic globalization movement; it was not a symbiotic globalization movement. Therefore the only new question we can legitimately and usefully ask is: Will the new phase of globalization be less parasitic and more symbiotic, or not? That is the question. Will the new globalization be to everybody's mutual benefit, or will it be the old story of parasitism on a global scale?

The parasitism in the world is not the sole responsibility of those who benefit from inequality. Even the victims have always contributed to their marginalization by their own wrong aims and methods — before colonization, during colonization and, even, after colonization. Myopic African chiefs were the main facilitators of the slave trade. Until very recently the Europeans did not possess the technological means to subdue the African continent as far as means of transport — that is to say, railways — weapons or medicine were concerned. Without the fratricidal, brother-against-brother wars fomented by African chiefs, neither the slave trade nor colonialism would have been possible. We would have defeated the colonialists and forced them, right from the beginning, to cooperate with us to everybody's mutual benefit. Weakness on the side of the potential victim always tempts the aggressor. The aggressor is always encouraged by the weakness of the potential victim.

Even today, however, the authorship of the inequality among peoples is still a joint responsibility of the victims — who in this case are Africans, Arabs and other marginalized peoples — of the parasitic globalization movement that is now 500 years old, on the one hand, and the beneficiaries of this hitherto unequal and, in the past, evil movement, on the other hand. Both the victims and the beneficiaries of the parasitic globalization movement are responsible for this situation. The beneficiaries of the hitherto parasitic globalization movement have been the North Americans, the Europeans and the Japanese.

For a variety of reasons, some formerly colonized peoples — such as the Indians, Indonesians, Pakistanis, South-East Asians and Native Americans — and formerly semi-colonized peoples, such as the Chinese, have made significant upward movements that are helping, slowly but surely, to even out the balance of power in the world. Some other peoples, however, on account of a number of endogenous and exogenous factors, are still living as the wretched of the Earth. Many Africans and some Arabs fall into this category of the still-unredeemed of the Earth. As I have said, the unredeemed are so categorized partly on account of their own internal mistakes — such as sectarianism, xenophobia, unprincipled conflicts, the strangulation of free enterprise, the political balkanization of their regions, the strangulation of political freedoms and so on — and partly on account of still very unfavourable exogenous factors. The most unfavourable such factor is the lack of access by these countries to markets in North America, the European Union, Japan, China, India and Russia.

The song about aid is meaningless without access to markets. Aid without access to markets is meaningless. All protectionism must end, especially in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation in Europe (OECD). Subsidies to the farmers of Europe must end, if we are talking of a global village of symbiosis, and not parasitism. I commend the American Government and President George Bush for the recent African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) initiative. Although Uganda has not yet benefited from AGOA on account of our endogenous weaknesses, which have been accentuated by the blurred views of our partners in the multilateral institutions, other African countries have started benefit, such as Kenya, Madagascar, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa. This is good. The African Growth and Opportunity Act enunciated by the American Government is the first good news I have heard in a long time. The Americans are at last beginning to change their image of being parasitic global villagers.

The Europeans must catch up with the Americans in shedding this uncomplimentary label. Although they have talked about "everything but guns" going into Europe from Africa, they are still giving subsidies to artificial farmers in Europe. As a consequence of the $1.2 trillion value of global trade in agricultural products, Africa gets only about $20 billion — if the recent results of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are included; that is about 2 per cent of the total. So of the total value of agricultural trade, Africa only gets 2 per cent. At the same time, the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are spending $361 billion on artificial subsidies for farmers of those countries. Yet these are the countries that evangelize in the name of free trade. The preachers of free trade are practising incredibly expensive protectionism. What an unfortunate paradox. These double standards must end.

Africa has removed some of the old impediments, some of the old endogenous factors, to private investment. The sanctity of private property is now almost a universal concept in Africa. Nationalization of private enterprises is no more. Some of the African countries have a consistently stable macroeconomic framework. Inflation in Uganda is now negative 0.3 per cent. The African currencies are now convertible; a large part of Africa is very peaceful; infrastructure is reasonable; and democracy is widely practised in Africa today. We are even addressing the issue of the excessive political Balkanization of the continent, which has 53 States, compared to 3 States in the whole North American continent.

We are handling this in a variety of ways, including through economic blocs like the Southern Africa Development Community in southern Africa, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in East and Central Africa and the Economic Community of West African States in western Africa. The world needs to encourage these positive trends in Africa by opening up their markets on a quota-free, tariff-free basis. This will, ipso facto, force multinational investors to rush to Africa and invest there. They are already doing so just by the limited AGOA measures by the Americans. With more civilized aims and methods, balanced world

development is possible and desirable for everybody, including OECD citizens who are forced to eat inferior foods and are taxed to protect those poor-quality foods against better foods from Africa.

Whenever I travel abroad, I pack my own Ugandan foods — milk, millet flour, fruits, legumes, chicken, honey and plantain bananas, called *matooke* in our language. The other day, on my way here, my pineapple stocks ran out and my staff bought pineapples from a supermarket in the United Kingdom. I took just one slice and terminated the whole exercise at once. First of all, the pineapple was hard. I had never seen a hard pineapple until I saw that one in London. It was less sweet and had an ammonia-like pungent taste. I had had the same experience in Washington once. They brought something they called a pineapple. I could not believe it. Why must citizens of the world endure these deprivations on account of policies designed to serve narrow interests? Why must this be? I will not eat pineapple again until I go back to Uganda.

The oppressors, the colonialists and those who sought to control the destiny of others used barbaric methods: genocide, forced labour, ethnocide and so on. It is amazing, therefore, that some of those who claim to be fighting for the liberation of oppressed peoples also use barbaric means such as terrorism. In the ongoing debate on terrorism I have not heard anybody bothering to define the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. What is the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist? Mzee Nelson Mandela — "Mzee" means someone who is dignified and elderly — was a freedom fighter until recently. Was he a terrorist? Not at all. Did anyone hear that Mr. Mandela had hijacked a plane or planted a bomb in a restaurant? But Mr. Mandela was a freedom fighter. He was not a terrorist. The difference between a terrorist and a freedom fighter lies in the fact that while a freedom fighter sometimes may be forced to use violence, he cannot use indiscriminate violence. The person who uses indiscriminate violence is a terrorist. A freedom fighter may sometimes be forced to use violence.

I was forced to use violence against Idi Amin. But I never hijacked a plane. It was never heard that Museveni hijacked a plane or planted a bomb in a bar. People in bars are not politicians. Some of them just go there to make merry. What kind of revolutionary is someone who kills such people? The person who uses indiscriminate violence is a terrorist. A terrorist does not differentiate between combatants and non-combatants, between civilians and servicemen and between armed servicemen and unarmed servicemen. Even if someone is a soldier, if he is off duty, he should not be attacked, if one claims to be a freedom fighter. He should not be attacked. It is against the laws of war. The terrorist fights a war without declaring one. That is why terrorists hijack planes, plant bombs in populated centres and so forth.

We normally get technical advice from other parts of the world. The Europeans always come to give us technical advice. I would like to give you technical advice about freedom-fighting. We have done very well in that. In Africa, since 1961, we have fought wars of liberation in Mozambique against the Portuguese; in Angola against the Portuguese; in Guinea-Bissau against the Portuguese; in Zimbabwe against minority whites; in South Africa against minority whites; in Namibia against minority whites; and in Uganda against Idi Amin. There was a criminal called Idi Amin whom we had to fight. However, we never used terrorism. This is on the record. We always fought combatant to combatant. Quite a number of times our comrades used mass action: strikes, demonstrations, petitions, diplomatic struggle and so on. Not a single plane was hijacked by African freedom fighters, although there were anti-colonial wars in all these countries.

Terrorist actions are misguided and criminal and must be opposed by all as a matter of principle. Africa was beginning to benefit from AGOA, the measure taken by the Americans to open their markets to our goods. Business has, however, now somewhat slumped in America. Therefore, the terrorists, who claim to be fighting for the Palestinian cause, are objectively hurting the interests of Africans, who have always been the allies of the Palestinians. This is counter-productive. The terrorists have also tried to polarize the world, pitting Moslems against Christians. This is erroneous and unacceptable. Exploitation knows no boundaries and cuts across all races and religions. Exploiters are found in all religions and races. The Arabs had to oppose Turkish imperialism. Yet both the Arabs and the Turks were Muslims. Why, then, did they have to oppose each other? One of the monsters of the last century, Idi Amin, of my country, was a Muslim. We had to get rid of him to liberate everybody, including the Muslims, in Uganda. War has been going

on in the Sudan for decades. Elements that claim to be acting in the name of Islam have been the ones taking the wrong position in this conflict, seeking hegemony over God's people.

I, therefore, support the position of the United States on this occasion, as we did in the Gulf War, in fighting and defeating these reactionaries, who profane the name of freedom fighters. If necessary, all countries of the world opposed to terrorism should contribute troops and finish the job quickly. The coalition against terrorism should be regarded in the same way as the coalition against fascism in the 1930s and 1940s.

Nevertheless, the just aspirations of the Palestinian people and of other oppressed peoples, like the people of southern Sudan, must be supported so that we can get peaceful resolutions to these conflicts. I welcome freedom and equality for all peoples of the world. Those who strive to dominate or exploit others have illegitimate ambitions. We now have a chance to build a new, just world. The free will of all peoples should be ensured. In addition, the most important instrument of emancipation, free trade, should give African goods quota- and tariff-free access to the markets of the countries of the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) and vice versa.

Africa is beginning to tame its conflicts. The conflict in Lesotho was resolved by an African mechanism. Recently, the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation ended the conflict in Burundi. It is possible to resolve our age-old problems and finally become part of the new world order rather than mere spectators of the process.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and invite him to address Assembly.

Major-General Kabila (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, to add my voice to those of the distinguished speakers before me, to offer you, Sir, on behalf of the people of the Congo and myself, our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Republic of Korea, your country, maintains excellent relations with mine.

May I also use this opportunity to offer our most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan, a distinguished son of Africa, on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General and on the Nobel Prize, which has been awarded to him in recognition of his commitment to the cause of promoting peace in the world.

The people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its Government and I condemn unreservedly the blind acts of terrorism that plunged the United States and all of humanity into grief on 11 September 2001. These were acts of gratuitous violence, which deserve only the contempt of the whole international community and of all nations that hold peace and justice dear.

By applying and implementing Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), my Government is committed to fully cooperate in advancing all initiatives aimed at eliminating terrorism in all its forms.

The Congolese people, which is itself the innocent victim of a war of aggression by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi — another kind of terrorism characterized by acts of barbarism that directly or indirectly brought about the death of millions of Congolese — had no trouble grasping the heinous nature the sad events that took place in the United States of America on 11 September 2001.

It would be tiresome to go back over the origin and consequences of the war of aggression that started on 2 August 1998, in flagrant violation of the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Thus, following the logic of peace and well aware that only non-violent settlements bring lasting peace, I can but welcome the many peace

initiatives that have sought to bring about negotiated solutions to the conflicts.

I have particularly in mind President Chiluba of Zambia, the appointed mediator of the Lusaka peace process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would also like to mention the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and in particular Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which, in accordance with the SADC charter, rallied around my country when it was attacked.

I would also like to address my thanks and gratitude to the United Nations and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), whose arduous work on the ground has been very praiseworthy, and to the OAU, the European Union and certain other traditional partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The situation on the ground has improved in spite of the bad faith displayed by some of the parties to the Lusaka Agreement. The disengagement of forces is in its final stages, and the effective end to hostilities which it has brought has been observed to the satisfaction of all. However, the return of armed tension has been seen in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the part of the country that is occupied by Rwanda. These hostilities have been wrongly described as fighting that has moved to the rear of the Rwandan forces. In fact, what we see is the logical consequence of the failure of a new plan by the Rwandan aggressors, who hoped to sweep away all Congolese resistance, the better to occupy the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to be able to continue to pillage our wealth unchallenged.

As far as the disarmament of the armed groups is concerned, we should note that a disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) programme, drafted by MONUC and the Joint Military Commission (JMC), was adopted by the Political Committee set up under the Lusaka Agreement. It provides, first of all, for the voluntary disarmament of all the armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this respect, the Congolese Government, reaffirming its good faith and its commitment to this plan, has regrouped and confined 3,000 Rwandan combatants in Kamina in Katanga province, and a MONUC mission has been there for several days now in order to identify these particular individuals.

As far as the withdrawal of foreign forces is concerned, the definitive and total departure of all Namibian forces has been noted. This movement of foreign forces back to their countries is continuing; now the Zimbabwean, Angolan and Ugandan military are beginning their withdrawal. Paradoxically, however, and despite the continuing demands by the international community through all of the relevant Security Council resolutions, Rwanda is actually reinforcing its military presence in the Congo.

The process of reconciliation, so long awaited through national dialogue, made significant advances during the preparatory meetings from 20-24 August 2001 in Gaborone, thanks to the Republican pact initiated by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate solemnly from this rostrum the full commitment of my Government to participate fully in the sessions on this dialogue to be held in the Republic of South Africa. I invite the facilitator to do everything possible to deal with pending issues in order to make sure that the forum regains its inclusive character, as provided for by the Lusaka Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is important that representatives of all sectors of our population should be able to participate in this dialogue so as to lay the foundations of a democratic State. I would invite the international community, at the appropriate time, to assist my country in organizing free, democratic and transparent elections, which would allow the Congolese people to choose their own leaders, leaders who will have the legitimacy that a popular election provides and which, in turn, guarantees political stability.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to invite the United Nations to institute exemplary sanctions against all those States, their accessories and accomplices that are pillaging the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I could not conclude my statement without thanking the Security Council members for having unanimously adopted resolution 1376 (2001) on 9 November, which condemns the establishment of a joint force set up by the Congolese rebels, instigated by Rwanda in violation of the Lusaka Agreement, in

violation of the DDRRR plan and of all relevant Security Council resolutions. This resolution is particularly welcome for its providing for the deployment of MONUC's phase III. It also provides for the demilitarization of the city of Kisangani, the neutrality of Kindu and the reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In my statement, I have condemned the infamous acts perpetrated against the people of the United States and of the world as a whole. I have also spoken of the catastrophic situation in my country, which has been victim of a war of aggression for the past three years. I have also noted the significant advances achieved in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which unfortunately risks being compromised through the bad faith of Rwanda and its Congolese rebel accomplices.

I have stressed how essential the support of the international community is if we are to achieve this process successfully and to launch the reconstruction of my country. The Congolese people, who have suffered so much, are asking only one thing of the United Nations and the international community: that justice be done for the weak and the strong, for rich and poor alike.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: I have the great pleasure to welcome to the United Nations The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Jugnauth (Mauritius): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to address this Assembly under your able and distinguished leadership. May I, on behalf of my delegation, take this opportunity to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. You may rest assured, Sir, of the fullest support and co-operation of my delegation in the daunting tasks that you will be called upon to confront during your tenure.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri for the excellent manner in which he steered the work of the last session of the General Assembly.

May I also congratulate a distinguished son of Africa, our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his unopposed election to a second term. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and to the United Nations confirms the high esteem in which he and our Organization are held.

As we gather in New York, the atrocities of 11 September remain fresh in our collective memory. Allow me to pay a special tribute to the memory of the thousands of innocent victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania.

We condemn the attempts of the terrorists to justify their acts as being in conformity with the tenets of Islam. We do so because neither Islam nor any other religion condones the killing of innocent civilians.

In order to preserve the lives of our citizens and their way of life, we are bound to focus on the sequels of those heinous terrorist attacks.

International terrorism must be fought with all the means at our disposal. Terrorists know only one thing, and that is destruction. While Mauritius is fully committed to the global coalition against terrorism, we urge the international community to take a long-term view of international terrorism. Terrorism is the greatest threat to international peace, security and development.

We also believe that the war on terrorism must be fought on the basis of principles and standards which are accepted by every single State. Terrorism remains terrorism, and there can be no justification for it at any time or under any circumstances. We also consider that cross-border terrorism has caused and is continuing to cause immeasurable damage in many parts of the Indian subcontinent and in Africa. We are convinced that there must be no double or multiple standards in the war against terrorism. In this context, we believe that the International Criminal Court must become

operational at the earliest date, and countries which rejected it in the past must review their stand.

We shall work closely with the Security Council and the international community at large in order to fully implement Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001).

Together with the war on terrorism, we need to wage many other wars, particularly in the light of the Millennium Declaration adopted last year. We need to pursue wars against poverty, ignorance, hunger and underdevelopment. The war against the scourge of HIV/AIDS is a war that we cannot afford to lose. It is our belief that the international community must remain focused on these issues, as they are very often the breeding ground for dissent, crises, wars and terrorism.

Peace and security will be in danger as long as nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction continue to exist and proliferate. Now that terrorists may get hold of or may already have in their possession such weapons, it becomes extremely urgent for the nuclear States to start meaningful discussions on the elimination of these weapons within a specified time frame.

With the conclusion of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we need to move towards early implementation of the measures contained in its Programme of Action. For Africa, this is a top priority. We are convinced that disarmament cannot remain a slogan; it must be effectively addressed.

Conflicts, wars and crises still persist in many parts of the African continent and elsewhere, particularly in the Balkans. Although we are encouraged by the latest developments in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and by the direct talks between Rwanda and Uganda to defuse situations before they become explosive, we consider that peace and security in Africa deserve the closer involvement of the international community, particularly in making available adequate financial resources. We expect early and full deployment of the third phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in keeping with the Security Council resolutions, and we support the inter-Congolese dialogue.

We are grateful to African leaders like former President Nelson Mandela, President Moi and former President Masire for their commitment to ridding Africa of conflicts and to paving the way for an African economic take-off.

Mauritius is committed to a major reform of the composition of the Security Council. We are convinced that we should amend the Charter in a way that would reflect the emergence of new power structures justifying an expansion of the membership. Whatever may be the criteria for an expanded membership, we believe that India ought to become a permanent member at the earliest opportunity. The expansion of the Security Council, as well as a reassessment of the absolutist veto, cannot be delayed any longer.

The birth of the African Union coincides with its role as the engine to drive forward the process of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The New Partnership for African Development is a road map for Africa to eradicate poverty and to achieve the sustainable growth and development of the continent, thereby allowing it to find its place in the world economy. It is a call for a new relationship between Africa and its partners.

We are mindful of the setback which the events of 11 September have caused to the major economies, but we are also hopeful that the G-8 will remain committed to providing to Africa all assistance for the effective implementation of NEPAD.

Mauritius supports the liberalization of international trade under the rules of the World Trade Organization. We are, however, disappointed at the lack of progress with regard to implementation issues and the undertakings of the major trading countries under previous Uruguay Round agreements. The terms of trade as well as non-trade concerns are tilted too much in favour of the developed countries, which are still denying market access. Africa, which today accounts for less than two per cent of global trade, could, with the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers in the developed countries, significantly increase its share of global trade and thus improve the standard of living of its people. An increase in trade for Africa will also mean a lesser dependence on aid.

While globalization throws up opportunities as well as challenges, we also have to be conscious of its negative aspects. We appeal for there to be no double dealing in trade with poor countries.

The Small Island Developing States experience a variety of inherent disadvantages. In their efforts to achieve sustainable development and the need to enhance their capabilities to function effectively within the new globalized trading arrangements, my delegation calls for the urgent and effective implementation of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

We welcome the statement by the United States that it supports the creation of a Palestinian State. We consider this to be a major step in the right direction for the resolution of the Middle East crisis. We urge the United States to be even-handed in its relations with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We also believe that the unilateral imposition of conditions prior to the resumption of peace talks is unhelpful. With the support of the international community, we are confident that Israel and Palestine can, within the framework of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan, work out a just and durable peace in which the States of Israel and Palestine can live side by side, secure within their respective boundaries.

In our region, the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are emerging as important institutions integrating our economies. These initiatives are helping the member States to better confront the challenges of globalization. COMESA is the first regional institution to have set up a free trade area. These regional institutions also address issues of good governance, as well as security and peace. We take an interest in the domestic situation of our fellow members inasmuch as whatever happens in one member State inevitably impacts, negatively or otherwise, on all member States.

We urge all parties to the Framework Agreement for National Reconciliation to take all measures to expedite the process towards the referendum in the Comoros that will usher in a new constitution. Under the aegis of the African Union, Mauritius is proposing to host a donors' meeting as soon as the Framework Agreement is implemented.

We continue to claim our sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago, which was excised by the United Kingdom from the then colony of Mauritius in violation of international law and of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). We are convinced that the time for the United Kingdom to engage in talks for the early retrocession of the archipelago to Mauritian sovereignty is long overdue, inasmuch as problems left over from colonial days cannot remain unresolved.

We are also concerned by the plight of all those Mauritians, commonly known as the Ilois, who were forcibly and in outright violation of their fundamental rights removed from the islands forming the archipelago by the then colonial Power. We support their legitimate claim for all appropriate remedies.

With regard to Tromelin, I reiterate the position of my delegation, as expressed in the General Assembly last year, and once again call on the French Government to enter into constructive negotiations for the settlement of this issue.

As I speak here, bombs are still falling over Afghanistan. We are aware that the living conditions of the civilian population are difficult. We deplore the loss of civilian lives. We are confident, however, that the international community will rise to the occasion in providing all humanitarian assistance to the needy in Afghanistan. We are hopeful that the efforts under way to install a broad-based Government in Afghanistan will be successful.

The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Morocco, the World Food Summit in Rome, the discussions on trade issues in Doha and a host of other meetings in recent days demonstrate the close dependence that we have on each other. No country can afford to go it alone and the many problems that we face today must be faced by us all in a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accommodation. We need to be continually engaged and to collaborate so that never again does humanity live the extremely painful moments that it lived after 11 September.

The United Nations is the forum to address all our concerns and we are sure that all countries, regardless of their might, understand that there can be no substitute for the rule of law, good governance, democracy and respect for the dignity and rights of the individual. We do recognize the threats posed by international terrorism and we are all prepared to do whatever has to be done to combat it. It is our hope that this togetherness will not be frittered away when the threat and the danger have disappeared. The world has walked away on too many occasions in the past. From

now on, we have to walk together and pave the way for a better world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Lagumdzija (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election.

I would like to join those who spoke before me in expressing my deep condolences to the people of the United States. The date of 11 September will be forever inscribed in our minds and hearts as the symbol of the most blatant affront to civilization and commonly accepted values. Regardless of the brutality of the terrorist attacks directed against innocent civilians, however, they failed in the attempt to polarize the world and to undermine the very foundations of our societies. Those attacks were attacks against all of us, too. We therefore fully support the approach outlined yesterday morning by President Bush.

Yes, the fight against all kinds of terrorism must be determined and precise. It has to target terrorists, who must be apprehended and brought to justice. At the same time, we have to do much more when we are talking about quick and massive help to the innocent civilians of Afghanistan.

I would like to use this opportunity to recall that my country promptly and resolutely joined the worldwide coalition against terrorism. And I am convinced that, by adopting such a clear position, my country is a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem, in this particular field. I spoke about this more extensively in this same Hall two days ago on the occasion of the meeting devoted to the dialogue among civilizations.

Coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was treated by various kinds of fundamentalists and radicals as a problematic and questionable Balkan country because of its multi-ethnic and multicultural nature, I am especially sensitive to the type of terrorism that misuses religious feelings and, in so doing, jeopardizes local societies and global society.

The war against terrorists is justified, but all of us will be losers if we fail to do everything we can to help the innocent people who are suffering today. Our experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina teaches us that military intervention, even when complemented by humanitarian assistance, is not enough for a sustainable, long-lasting solution.

At the same time, we — and when I say "we", I mean the international community speaking with one voice, together with local democratic forces, regardless of their current strength — have to have a clear vision of a political solution, accompanied by a programme for social and economic development, once the military intervention is over. Only such a comprehensive approach — military, humanitarian, political and socio-economic — will leave no room for the terrorists to interpret the intervention in Afghanistan as a war against Islam or as a symbol of the clash of civilizations.

The terrorists will lose. Without a comprehensive approach, we might be losers, too, by the measure of ethical and universal human values. That is why we have to tackle these areas of future action together, starting today.

At a time when humanity has reached for the highest objectives but also carried out the worst deeds, there should be no doubt that the United Nations can fulfil its new tasks, confronting old and new challenges, leading in the building of a prosperous world founded no longer on force but on the rule of law, not on a balance of power but on a balance of cooperation.

The contribution of the international community in achieving progress in my country, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, was particularly visible in the role of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Stabilization Force, the United Nations High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other members of the family of the international community present in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We particularly recognize and value the role of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in police reform and the substantial upgrading of the judicial system. The United Nations family of organizations was certainly one of the key players in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multiethnic, tolerant and democratic State.

Knowing that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the present form will terminate by the end of 2002, we expect the United Nations mission activities to continue in a different form. However, we would like to see a smooth transition without any interruption in these extremely important activities.

The noble goals and accomplishments of our Organization were honoured recently, and I would like to extend sincere and heartiest congratulations to the Secretary-General and the whole of the United Nations for the recognition by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.

I would like to inform the Assembly that we have decided to present candidature of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the year 2010. We are convinced that by doing so, we confirm our commitment to contributing fully to the work of the United Nations. It would also be a clear sign of advanced stability and normalization of life in our country, and particularly of our commitment to economic and democratic development. Therefore, we hope that as early as in 10 years from now, Bosnia and Herzegovina will succeed in becoming a member of the most important political body of the United Nations.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are working daily to live up to the vision of a safer and more peaceful, stable and self-sustaining country. Our efforts are directed toward three main sets of priorities.

First is the rule of law, through the speedy implementation of the latest Constitutional Court decisions and through proper judiciary and police actions fighting terrorism and organized crime, combating corruption, arresting indicted war criminals and creating a stable environment for the return of refugees.

Second are the further building and strengthening of the State's institutions.

Third are economic reforms directed to the strengthening of economic activities; establishment of a single economic space; and setting up the conditions for upgraded education, thus offering a choice for our young generations to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina and become an inseparable factor in its development and future.

Of course, implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement and the continuous adjustment and upgrading of our legal framework according to European standards are the foundation of activities of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels.

Once again, I would like to express the gratitude of my Government to the international community for its devoted support of the enduring stability and development of my country. We are determined to move from the position of a patient or passive recipient of aid from international organizations and institutions to one of a partner in and contributor to international efforts. We have to go through the process of being first a recipient and then a partner in order to finally become the owner of the changes in our country.

We are aware that responsibility for healing the consequences of the war and post-war stagnation, and for the removal of impediments to faster stabilization and progress, rest primarily with the political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in its integration into European and North Atlantic organizations. The establishment of contractual relations with the European Union through the stabilization and association process is one of the priority strategic goals of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Further improvement of good relations with neighbouring countries and increased regional cooperation remain key elements for the stability and development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

Relations with the Republic of Croatia since the democratic changes in January last year are improving every day, in every sense.

As a result of the democratic changes last year in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and

Herzegovina has established full diplomatic relations with that country, which opened the official channels of the two countries to deal with a number of important matters.

However, a number of issues that burdened relations between the neighbouring countries are still on the agenda. Some of them have already been solved in bilateral meetings, but we are looking forward to tackling them more actively.

Today is exactly one year since the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the first time in 10 years of being driven by nationalism, gave less than 50 percent of their votes to three major ethnic parties. It took us almost four months to establish the new, democratic, multi-ethnic, Europe-oriented Government that is now in place. We believe that we are on the way to striking a proper balance between the necessary assistance of the international community and further decision-making by ourselves.

Finally, I can assure you today that our country has a leadership with a clear vision and is ready to act accordingly. For years, Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the world's international and regional problems. Today, my country is becoming one of the solutions. With this conviction, we are looking at the important challenges and tremendous tasks that are still ahead of us. We must confront them without delay. I am standing here to say we will do it.

Mr. Tang Jiaxuan (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: Mr. President, first of all, please allow me to warmly congratulate you on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that under your able guidance and with the close cooperation of all delegates, this session will be crowned with success. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Holkeri for what he did as President of the last session of the General Assembly.

A year ago, the United Nations convened the historic Millennium Summit. The United Nations Millennium Declaration issued by the Summit identifies the objectives for promoting world peace and development in the new century.

International developments over the past year demonstrate that more and more countries have opted for increasing dialogue and cooperation, preserving world peace and seeking common development. To be sure, the cause of human progress still involves a long and arduous effort. Factors of uncertainty in the international situation are on the rise. More efforts should be made to democratize international relations, and there has been no marked change in the irrational international economic order.

Terrorism is a widespread scourge that threatens world peace and stability. We strongly condemn the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September, and extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the innocent victims, as well as to the Government and the people of the United States. China has always opposed all forms of terrorism. No matter when, where or in what form terrorism strikes, and no matter whom it is directed against, it should be met with condemnation and responded to with counter-strikes by the international community, which should adopt a unified position on the matter.

China has taken an active part in international cooperation against terrorism. In addition to joining most of the international conventions against terrorism, China has ratified the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, concluded by the member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China is in favour of a primary role for the United Nations and the Security Council in the international effort against terrorism. China supports the relevant resolutions that have been adopted and is in favour of closer cooperation and coordination among the various countries concerned to this end.

China strongly believes that any military action against terrorism should have a clearly defined target and avoid harming innocent people. All such actions should be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other universally recognized norms of international law, and should serve the long-term interests of peace in the region and the world at large.

China believes that terrorism is a tiny fringe of extreme evil, representing neither one particular ethnic group nor one particular religion. They must not, therefore, be lumped together. China, too, is threatened by terrorism. The "Eastern Turkestan" terrorist forces are trained, equipped and financed by international terrorist organizations. The fight against the "Eastern Turkestan" group is an important aspect of the international fight against terrorism.

In today's world, the question of security is becoming increasingly multifaceted and globalized. Only enhanced international cooperation can help us effectively cope with global security challenges and bring about universal and lasting security. Countries should endeavour to foster a new security concept, based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and collaboration. They should seek security through mutual trust and pursue cooperation to their mutual benefit so as to effectively reduce factors of insecurity.

The issue of arms control has always been closely interrelated with that of security. In the face of the new situation, we should go on working for the preservation of the existing legal regime for international arms control and disarmament and for the maintenance of global strategic stability, without jeopardizing the security of any country.

Tackling regional hot spots is vital to regional and global security. We are following with deep concern the current developments in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict that broke out in September last year is continuing unabated. It poses a grave threat to the Middle East peace process and to regional stability. China supports the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. It also supports the Palestinian people in their just struggle to regain their legitimate national rights and interests. We hope that the Israeli and Palestinian sides will take constructive measures and closely coordinate with the international community in its mediating efforts so as to create conditions for easing the tension and reactivating the peace process. China supports a greater role for the Security Council in this respect.

We are concerned about the situation in South Asia. Given the current complex situation, we hope that the countries in the region will strengthen mutual understanding and mutual trust and coexist in peace and amity. As a neighbour of Afghanistan, we have been following the changing Afghan situation closely. We believe that, in order to find a solution to the Afghan issue, the following principles should be observed. First, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan should be ensured. Secondly, the Afghan people should be allowed to decide on a solution independently. Thirdly, the future government in Afghanistan should be broad-based and embody the interests of all ethnic groups in the country; Afghanistan should live in amity with all countries, particularly its neighbours. Fourthly, the solution should serve peace and stability in the region. Fifthly, the United Nations should play a more active role.

Since the beginning of this year, the world economy has clearly slowed down, and the situation has been further aggravated by the incidents of 11 September. Developing countries are finding themselves in increasingly dire straits. The international community must act with a greater sense of urgency and accord higher priority to development.

Developed countries should act more vigorously to promote development. They should adopt effective measures and make greater efforts to revitalize the global economy. We hope that the developed countries will demonstrate a broader vision and a cooperative spirit in providing assistance to developing countries.

In recent years, anti-globalization activities in many parts of the world have increased. In fact, globalization is neither a panacea for development nor a monster causing disaster. The appropriate response to globalization should maximize its advantages and minimize its disadvantages so that all countries can come out winners and prosper side by side. Globalization should benefit all people from all social strata in all countries.

The United Nations has an irreplaceable role to play in international cooperation in response to globalization. It should increase its input in development and work more effectively to fulfil the development objectives set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

China is supportive of the World Trade Organization's plans to launch a new round of multilateral trade talks. It is our hope that the new round will give full consideration to the concerns and interests of the developing countries.

The Ninth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders Meeting was held successfully in October in Shanghai, China. The meeting was convened at a critical moment, soon after the incidents of 11 September, when prospects for the global economy seemed grim. Focusing on the theme "Meeting new challenges in the new century: promoting common prosperity through participation and cooperation", the leaders conducted an in-depth exchange of views and reached broad consensus. Having boosted intra-APEC cooperation among the

members and reinforced their resolve to restore economic growth, the meeting sent out a clear, positive signal to markets throughout the world and took a resolute step forward in advancing cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting will have a positive and far-reaching impact on Asia-Pacific economic cooperation.

President Jiang Zemin made clear to the world China's future objectives, guiding principles and domestic and foreign policies in the important speech that he delivered on 1 July this year. The principal task for the Chinese people in the new century is to press ahead with the modernization programme, work towards the grand cause of national reunification, safeguard world peace and promote common development.

Indeed, the purpose of China's foreign policy is to safeguard world peace and promote common development. China needs an environment of friendship and good-neighbourliness and external conditions of stability and prosperity. To achieve, and safeguard, such an international environment serves China's national interests. It is also China's duty as a member of the international community.

We believe that all civilizations and social systems in the world can, and should, exist side by side on a long-term basis, complementing one another and making progress together, in a spirit of seeking common ground while putting aside differences.

We stand ready to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries in the world on an equal footing towards world peace and development, with the aim of achieving common development. Our entry into the World Trade Organization will usher in a completely new phase of our opening-up process.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the restoration of China's lawful seat in the United Nations. Tremendous changes have since taken place in the world, in China and in the United Nations. China's commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, however, remains unchanged. In the new century, China will, as always, vigorously support the work of the United Nations and continue to work together with other Member States for a better world.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Jack Straw, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw (United Kingdom): Please allow me warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

This day, 11 November, is the anniversary of the Armistice which ended the slaughter of the First World War and is a day of remembrance here in the United States, in the United Kingdom and across much of the world. It is a day when all of us remember the sacrifice of those who, over the last century, gave their lives that others might live in freedom.

For our parents and grandparents, the end of the Second World War stood as a turning point, a moment to establish a new world order. Their vision was inscribed at the very beginning of the Charter of the United Nations:

> "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

With these words, they founded the international community.

For some of us, the subsequent half-century has been the most peaceful era of our history. Yet we know that no one's freedom can be secure while others suffer.

On this Remembrance Day, we remember something else — the thousands who died just two months ago, on 11 September. A third of the nations represented here in the General Assembly lost citizens at the World Trade Center. But just as our predecessors saw hope in the midst of despair, so we now face the task of building a new and better world.

It is fitting that it was here at the United Nations, on 12 September, that the world began to fight back against the terrorist threat. We showed our joint resolve, in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, when we adopted resolutions demanding that terrorists and those who harbour them be held to account for their evil actions.

I applaud Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which established the Counter-terrorism Committee and which requires all Member States to respond to the global terrorist threat.

We do surely have to take every effective measure against international terrorist networks, whose malign influence is felt in every part of the globe, not least by adopting a comprehensive convention on terrorism and the draft Nuclear Terrorism Convention.

We also have to confront an unpalatable truth: that we still face a real and immediate danger. The murderous groups who plotted the terrible events of 11 September could strike again at any time. Thus our first duty, to our citizens and to each other, is to defend ourselves against that threat.

When the nations of the world agreed the United Nations Charter, they recognized the right of self-defence in Article 51. It is in exercise of this right that the military coalition is now engaged in action against Al Qaeda and the Taliban regime which harbours them.

Taking military action is always a tough decision. But here it truly was unavoidable, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to President Bush for the steadfast and careful manner in which the United States proceeded.

But in defending the world from terror, we have to do our utmost to spare innocent Afghan people further suffering. For decades, the Afghans have seen their country exploited by outside powers and riven by conflict. In five years, their society has been systematically destroyed by one of the most brutal regimes the world has ever known.

But at last today, the international community is united in its efforts to feed and shelter the millions of refugees through this harsh winter, and it is determined to help build a new Afghanistan.

For the first time in decades, there is consensus in the Security Council as a whole, and among Afghanistan's neighbours, that there should be a broad-based government in Kabul, reflecting Afghanistan's rich ethnic diversity, and that the future of Afghanistan must be put into the hands of the Afghan people. There must be no more Great Games with Afghan people as the pawns, and no more regional rivalries, with Afghan people as the victims.

We know that the one institution in the world which can deliver this better future is here now: the United Nations. We should all give Ambassador Brahimi every support in planning a future that leads to Afghanistan retaking its place as a fully fledged member of the international community, able to protect and promote the interests of all of its people.

That nations have come so closely together to fight terrorism shows how the world is changing. However, we have to build a deeper and wider consensus to tackle the other great issues which we face. It is not just the Afghan people who have been excluded from the values on which the United Nations was founded.

Conflict, poverty, discrimination and injustice still blight the lives of millions in every part of the globe. Individuals' rights, especially women's rights, are ignored with impunity, and then the very structure of communities collapses. Where this happens, where societies disintegrate or States fail, we put at risk the basis of global society itself.

If 11 September teaches us anything, it is surely this: that if we ignore our moral responsibilities to each other, we will be forced later to face painful consequences.

Nowhere is the need for action now more obvious than in Africa. Yes, there has been some progress there. International work on the ground to resolve conflict has brought hope to Sierra Leone and to the Great Lakes region. Responsible Governments working across the continent in partnership with effective international donors have succeeded in reducing poverty. But we should not delude ourselves about the scale of the task that remains in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa average income today is much lower than it was 30 years ago.

The New Partnership for African Development therefore requires the support of the whole community of nations. Africa deserves the same opportunities that we in the West take for granted. We in the West must acknowledge that while removing barriers to global trade and to finance, we have not always dismantled barriers to dignity and equality. In theory, global free trade should have created the conditions for every economy to exploit its comparative advantage in the world marketplace. In practice, protectionist barriers still survive, especially against trade in agriculture, damaging Africa's interests today, and all our interests tomorrow.

As we meet here in New York, our colleagues at the World Trade Organization meeting in Doha have the opportunity to begin to put these injustices right. Launching a new trade round would be the clearest possible signal of the world's determination to spread the benefits of wealth and of prosperity more fairly.

Our predecessors gave us the United Nations. In the succeeding years, it developed expertise in peacekeeping, in conflict prevention, in human rights and in reconstruction, to consolidate the gains of 1945. My message today is that our generation faces as daunting a task, but a different one. That task is to defeat international terrorism. But to do that we have to combine the agenda of 10 September with the agenda of 11 September, as the Secretary-General emphasized in his powerful speech yesterday. And we must take not only military action, but also diplomatic action to reduce tensions that terrorists exploit.

Nowhere are those tensions greater than in the Middle East. The path to a settlement there is plain. It has to be based on a political process that implements United Nations resolutions. It must deliver security for Israel within recognized borders while at the same time creating a viable Palestinian State. We should give the parties every help to reach a settlement. But our efforts will be wasted unless the parties themselves show the political will to bring violence to a halt, and the political courage to make a deal.

We have seen, in the most graphic and brutal way possible, that chaos in one part of the world can undermine security in all parts of the world. Against that chaos we must set our vision of peaceful cooperation among stable nations. Achieving that vision has now taken on a new urgency. Indeed, we are at a moment of strategic opportunity, which comes no more than once to any generation. We owe it to those who founded the international community to seize this moment. Most of all, we owe it to those who will come after us.

Today we remember with sorrow the sacrifices that earlier generations made. We remember with pride the brave decisions that they took to build a better world for us, and we salute the reconciliation and recovery that followed. My hope is that our children and our grandchildren will look back on this period with no less pride, and that future generations will be able to say that we here faced up to a great evil; we did not duck the decisions we had to take; we established peace in Afghanistan, constructive coexistence in the Middle East and sustained development in Africa. We made the necessary endeavour in the finest tradition of the United Nations.

The United Nations stands for everything the terrorist seeks to destroy. My hope is that our successors will look back on this era and say that we saved succeeding generations from the scourge of terrorism as well as from the scourge of war.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): The terrorist attacks of 11 September are going to thoroughly change the world, but we do not yet know how. The aftermath of these events has shown that there are more issues that unite us than issues that separate us. We also know that preventing terrorism and other global threats requires the broadest possible cooperation. The United Nations is the main forum for such cooperation. This was demonstrated immediately after the attacks, when both the General Assembly and the Security Council promptly condemned the terrorist attacks as threats to international peace and security and expressed their readiness to combat all forms of terrorism. Now it is extremely urgent to finalize the negotiations on a comprehensive convention on the suppression of international terrorism. I appeal to everyone to quickly agree on the outstanding draft in question.

Mr. Hor Namhong (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

These attacks have also profoundly affected our sense of security, both as Member States and as individuals. Fear and insecurity were globalized overnight. But democratic societies cannot be destroyed by such acts. When faced with threats our common values and democracy will only get stronger. Finland condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and whoever its victims may be. There is no justification for it.

I extend, on behalf of the Government of Finland, our condolences to the families of the victims, to the citizens of New York and to all Americans, including President Bush. We have expressed our solidarity with the United States, as we would have done with any other country affected by such attacks.

The rapidly changing world and the new threats require changed thinking in the international organizations. We must respond quickly and efficiently to the challenges of the real world. We cannot bury ourselves in old rhetoric and positions when people outside require concrete action and help. International cooperation, after all, benefits all States, big and small.

I hope that the unique coalition and cooperation against terrorism will be reflected on other issues of common concern to us.

The statement in the Millennium Declaration that the United Nations is

> "the indispensable common house of the entire human family, through which we will seek to realize our universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development" (*resolution 55/2, para. 32*)

is now truer than ever. The fight against terrorism and the Afghan situation are at the top of the United Nations agenda, but there are other issues and processes that require true cooperation in order to be successful. In this context, I would like to underline the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the world conferences on sustainable development, financing for development and children.

One of our common responsibilities is the maintenance of international peace and security. This is one of the issues that unites us and is in everybody's interest. The United Nations is the only international organization with global competence in the area of security policies. Ongoing crises are, however, so complex that they require united efforts and combined resources. This is particularly true of the Middle East, where a return to the peace process is an urgent necessity. To this end, we will have to pressure both parties, as well as those who can influence them.

The complexity of international crises has required a close and comprehensive look by the United Nations at how to improve its performance in peace operations. The whole continuum that reaches from conflict prevention, through crisis management to post-conflict peace-building, with a strong emphasis on preventive action in every phase, requires a fresh approach, as proposed in the report of the Brahimi Panel and in the comprehensive review of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Finland supports the full implementation of such an approach.

The report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflicts and its recommendations are important contributions to the core activities of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's call, reiterated by the Security Council, on the development of a comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy is timely and warranted. By the adoption of the Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, the European Union has underlined its political commitment to pursue conflict prevention as one of the main objectives in its external relations. This is also a good example of mutually supportive actions by the United Nations and the European Union. This is again an issue that requires a holistic view and a system-wide approach.

Finland supports increased focus on the part of the United Nations on crisis prevention and the root causes of conflicts. Promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, increased equality and social development, as well as the prevention of environmental threats and the eradication of poverty, discrimination, racism and impunity, all point in the same direction.

The complexity of current crises — be they in Afghanistan, the Middle East, the Balkans or Africa — and the limited resources available have made different organizations seek cooperation and complementarity in their actions. Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter puts strong emphasis on regional arrangements aimed at dealing with issues relating to international peace and security. The Security Council should utilize such regional arrangements for enforcement action.

The European Union is in the process of developing its own crisis-management capability, in terms of both civilian and military capacities. In this work, Finland, just like the entire European Union, is committed to contributing to international peace and security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The European Union has adopted conclusions on its cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management with the United Nations. Areas and modalities for such cooperation have been identified in close cooperation with the United Nations. It will progress as the European Common Security and Defence Policy develops its focus on substantive issues and concrete needs in a pragmatic manner. This cooperation focuses on conflict prevention, civilian and military aspects of crisis management and on regional crises like the ones in the western Balkans, the Middle East and Africa.

There will be a wider and more concrete scope for cooperation within two years when the European Union achieves its military capability. At present, it is difficult to say what kind of operations the European

Union could or would execute and when it could do so. In Finland's case, our law requires that either the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mandate such an operation.

In today's complex crises civilian aspects of crisis management have and will become all the more relevant in all organizations. The European Union has developed its civilian capabilities in four priority areas, namely civilian police, strengthening the rule of law, strengthening civilian administration and civil protection. In these areas, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as other international organizations, must also seek synergies and complementarity.

The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration are outstanding achievements in the history of the United Nations. The Declaration manifests a unique commitment to multilateralism by all the Member States of the United Nations. It sets an ambitious agenda and goals for the United Nations for years to come. However, without effective implementation it is only a piece of paper. Its implementation also requires common action and strengthened commitment to multilateralism. The Secretary-General's road map gives us guidance on how to maintain the millennium momentum and how to proceed, although the onus is on the Member States.

This year alone the United Nations has organized five conferences and special sessions and hundreds of other meetings that are an integral part of the follow-up and implementation of the Millennium Declaration. These processes should show the same kind of commitment as was encountered in the Summit. Unfortunately, I have to say that none of these recent conferences and special sessions has come close to reflecting the commitment that was so noticeable in the Millennium Summit. We need invigorated common efforts to genuinely implement the ambitious agenda adopted only a year ago and to uphold multilateralism. I hope we can see improvement in this respect in coming summits and conferences.

The moral and political commitment to the Declaration should lead to its effective implementation. The strong support for these common objectives and our determination to achieve them need much more action in order to become a reality. Such challenges as halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living in poverty should not be jeopardized by narrow national interests.

Globalization and harnessing it to benefit all humankind remain one of the major challenges to the international community. A common approach is needed in this work too. We have to learn how to deal with the paradox of democracy spreading across the world, and there is much disillusionment about its workings. The key to explaining this paradox is globalization. It poses a demand to develop strong, new, democratic policies and institutions for international and global governance. They must be developed in the United Nations, but also at the regional level, such as in the European Union.

The Government of Finland recently prepared a study on Finnish policies on globalization. One of its main conclusions was that in resolving multinational crises created by globalization, the role of cooperation between national Governments will be growing, not diminishing. The United Nations is the most universal forum for intergovernmental cooperation. Finland supports the United Nations as one of the central actors in harnessing globalization at the universal level.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Reinaldo Ruggiero, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Ruggiero (Italy): I wish to congratulate the President on his election to head the first session of the General Assembly of the new millennium. I am certain that his experience and commitment will enable us to achieve the high goals that we all share. I also renew the Italian Government's warmest congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. His appointment to a second term to the leadership of the United Nations is both welcome and unanimously appreciated.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed the General Assembly yesterday, speaking on behalf of the European Union. Italy fully shares his views and supports his statement.

Like our Belgian colleague and previous speakers, I would like to express once more, on this solemn occasion, to the Government and people of the United States our deep solidarity following the appalling terrorist acts perpetrated against them. We share their suffering over the shocking loss of human life and the sorrow of thousands of families.

These acts defy the most basic values of civil coexistence. We condemn them and reaffirm our full commitment to the fight against international terrorism, a struggle on which the United Nations has conferred full legitimacy. We believe that the United Nations remains the central forum to which we must turn in drafting a comprehensive response to terrorism.

This is why we need strict application of the full range of measures adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council during the days immediately following the 11 September attacks. Resolution 1373 (2001), in particular, must be implemented, urgently and vigorously. I also hope that everyone shows the necessary flexibility to allow a swift conclusion of the negotiations on a comprehensive convention against international terrorism.

On 7 November, by a majority of more than 90 per cent, the Italian Parliament approved the Government's decision to contribute ground troops, naval forces and air units to operations against international terrorism. This confirms my country's awareness that the stakes are high and proves the robustness of our national consensus in facing this challenge. The fight must be conducted in a targeted manner, avoiding the loss of innocent lives, until the objective has been fully achieved, without, however, neglecting humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people, both within the country and in the refugee camps. But the problem of the political future of Afghanistan, a problem to be solved only by the Afghan people, must, of course, remain a high priority in the agenda of the United Nations, together with the objective of regional stability.

But in crafting a credible, diversified global strategy to eradicate international terrorism, we must also search for solutions to the most delicate regional crises and to the global problems that loom over our lives. These include hunger, poverty, ignorance, inequality, underdevelopment, violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and threats to the environment and health.

At the top of the list of regional crises is the Middle East, an area physically close to Italy, and one to which we pay close attention. Here, we are working both in a national capacity and within the European Union to create, as soon as possible, the conditions for an end to the violence and a true return to negotiations for a comprehensive, lasting peace in the region based on the establishment of a viable and democratic State for the Palestinians and an end to the occupation of their territories and on Israel's right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

This framework should also include an ambitious plan, like the one adopted to rebuild a devastated Europe in the wake of World War II, for public and private investments and inter-regional assistance towards fostering solidarity among the region's States and peoples — in other words, a new Marshall Plan. Special attention should be paid to the economic and social growth and development of the Palestinian population, to which Italy is fully committed and for which it remains prepared to do more in the future.

In the Balkans, we have noted encouraging progress despite persisting tensions. Our goal there is to prevent destabilizing tendencies and to foster regional cooperation and economic development, including closer ties with the European Union.

As for the challenges of globalization, we should first of all make the success of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha a primary objective. In fact, many of the global problems I have listed can be alleviated by ensuring that the international market economy and multilateral free trade operate fairly and continue to foster inclusiveness, integration and more equitable and sustainable growth of all countries through agreed rules. This latest WTO round should be one of growth and development, focusing in particular on the problems of the developing and least developed countries.

But in order to assure a better response to globalization's most problematic aspects, other major objectives must be pursued. And the universal organization with the moral authority to meet this challenge is the United Nations.

The first objective is the maintenance of international peace and security. Italy's commitment is strong and long-standing. In fact, we are one of the top three contributors of men and resources to peace operations led and authorized by the United Nations. In this light, we appreciate the reports that the Secretariat has issued in the past two years, which suggest a vision of peace activity as a single, three-sided concept, encompassing conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

Italy also values the document that the Secretary-General submitted to Member States on the prevention of armed conflicts, emphasizing the direct connection between safeguarding peace and fighting underdevelopment. In fact, no peacekeeping action can achieve lasting results unless it is coupled with measures to strengthen government institutions, safeguard the human, civil and cultural rights of all communities and rebuild the economic and social fibre of affected areas.

The second objective is to foster development and eradicate poverty. We must ensure that all the countries of the world benefit from the opportunities created by interdependencies and progress, in particular in the areas of information and communication technology. The global United Nations conferences of the 1990s laid the groundwork for the definition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon. It is not only characterized by low income and consumption, but also a lack of food, health care, schooling and environmental stability. This is a vicious cycle that we must break, through coordinated and integrated initiatives. To reverse the downward spiral, we must enhance both the material and the human dimensions of development.

The Millennium Declaration spells out the objectives to be attained by 2015. Italy has shown its commitment to these goals through the shaping of its international actions and the shouldering of its responsibilities during the year of its G-8 presidency. One example was the substantive outreach initiative at the Genoa Summit, involving a meeting with five African Heads of State and the Secretary-General to discuss the New African Initiative and launch a global fund to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Finally, we must continue to nurture and strengthen development assistance and reach the goal of having the most developed countries dedicate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to this pursuit. In this context, debt relief is another essential tool to free up the necessary resources in developing countries in order to stimulate their economies, for instance by promoting public investment in health care and schooling. Italy is a leader in this field by virtue of recent laws that allow it to gradually cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

As I said before, the United Nations has the moral authority to take on today's new challenges. This fact was highlighted by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Secretary-General and to the Organization as a whole. However, its structure and procedures must keep pace with the times. Italy believes in the reform of the United Nations, a reform that should affect all of its bodies, including the Security Council. Let me reiterate the need for a comprehensive reform that addresses the relevant issues in all their aspects. Such a reform should be designed to produce greater efficiency, legitimacy and transparency. It should also meet the general expectations of democracy, universality and inclusiveness.

In addition, to create the conditions for stable growth of prosperity and security for all humankind, we need more effective governance of globalization. The documents prepared by the Secretariat make great strides in this direction. Now is the time to translate the commitments of the Millennium Declaration into action. Italy will support every initiative undertaken for this purpose.

Never have we had a better opportunity to solve our problems, yet never have we faced greater risks. The answer does not lie in denying the reality of interdependence and growing globalization. It is within our ability to promote better governance of the international system. Never before has the world had so many human, financial and technological resources at its disposal. The answer lies in our hands, in our collective will.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, Mr. Ali Abdi Farah.

Mr. Farah (Djibouti)*(spoke in French)*: In view of the catastrophic events that took place on 11 September, it is only fitting that first and foremost we once again offer our deepest condolences to the Government and people of the United States. This was a hateful and diabolical act of terrorism that claimed thousands of precious human lives and caused untold physical destruction, without parallel in history. This brutal attack has put us all on notice. It was truly the day the world changed.

One way or another, this tragedy affects us all. Not a single country is immune from terrorism, inasmuch as it is beyond the capacity of any one

country to counter it. The international community must work together, ideally through the United Nations, so that the counter-measures take the form of legitimacy and acceptability. In this respect, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) provides us with the necessary framework.

We in Djibouti have already established a suitable mechanism to counter terrorism, in all its aspects, that could come from our territory. We are also in the process of examining the existing international conventions and protocols on terrorism with a view to signing and ratifying them all. However, while doing all this, we must not lose sight of the plight of the people of Afghanistan — the terror, the desperation and the starvation facing impoverished people during this grave crisis. Also, we must not squander the extraordinary opportunity we now have to examine all possible or probable causes and deep roots of terrorism, including attitudes, frustrations and current economic and political conditions.

May I join the delegations that preceded me to offer the President our congratulations on his brilliant election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. His vast experience and demonstrated capacity and skills will indeed be vital to our deliberations. We also wish to express our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, whose leadership at the fifty-fifth session has resulted in tangible achievements.

Permit me also to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan on his re-election and for the work he accomplished during his first term, most notably for the extent to which he was able to institute much-needed reforms and restore the relevance and central role of the United Nations, while enhancing its capacity and effectiveness. He has recognized that far too many people live on the margins of society, reduced to silence by endemic poverty, debt, the AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria. He has, in effect, become the voice of the world's silent majority. It is not by chance, therefore, that, together with the Organization he heads, he has received the Nobel Peace Prize. We congratulate him wholeheartedly for this distinct and rare honour bestowed upon him and the United Nations system.

May I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the breadth and relevance of his report on the work of the Organization. The United Nations has a vital role to play in today's rapidly evolving world, and the report offers a comprehensive update on all its activities. With reference to peace and security, as the Secretary-General has stressed, we must all be struck by the number of conflicts raging in the world today. Preventing the recurrence of conflict is a central priority, and this means that our focus needs to shift from a culture of management and control to one of prevention and long-term development.

Besides conflict, we are witness to enormous human suffering caused by natural disasters and complex situations that continue to grow in scale, escalating the need for humanitarian assistance.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General continues to place importance on the fight against endemic poverty and that the international community has launched a sustained campaign to make the right to development a palpable reality for everyone. The participation of the poor must become a priority in order to eradicate rural poverty, to ensure the well-being of children and to strengthen the earning potential of women.

If we are to reduce by half the number of people living in poverty by 2015, as called for in the Millennium Declaration, we must substantially increase Official Development Assistance, alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries and dismantle the protectionist barriers of developed countries. The Least Developed Countries, in particular, face enormous obstacles, such as declining inflows of capital, inadequate social services and the lack of infrastructure, in addition to environmental constraints. In essence, the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 call for an increase in foreign capital inflows, including Official Development Assistance; direct foreign investment; an expansion of debt relief; greater preferential market access and increased technical assistance.

Silently but very quickly, the world is drifting towards another dangerous crisis: water scarcity. By 2025, one in every three people worldwide will be affected by the lack of water. Some 2.7 billion people live in regions facing severe water shortages and, once again, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, which are the most densely populated areas and among the areas of least income, will be the hardest hit. Currently, 450 million people living in 29 countries, including my

own, Djibouti, are experiencing acute drinking water shortages. Unlike oil and most other strategic resources, drinking water has no substitute. Whether water is needed for drinking, agriculture or environment-related purposes, such as the survival of lakes and rivers, we have on our hands a potential crisis that risks causing an unprecedented disaster for food security and the fight against hunger and poverty. A combination of global warming, wasteful habits, aridity and the lack of rainfall means that the water sources millions traditionally rely on are now slowly drying up. There is no longer enough water for all our needs. Beyond the international treaties and institutional mechanisms, the international community must act to mitigate this crisis. Now is the time to act.

While the recent international terrorist attacks in the United States have rightly dominated the world's attention, other pressing problems, such as the AIDS pandemic, must still be urgently attended to. The special session of the General Assembly devoted to this scourge, held in June, took a decisive step towards finding collective solutions, actions and commitments. However, there is still concern that these non-binding commitments may not be carried out. The global AIDS fund launched by the Secretary-General has made some progress, but contributions to date have fallen far short of the expected target. We are now unfortunately familiar with the statistics of deaths and the social and economic devastation caused by this scourge, particularly in Africa. In the search for a solution and what measures to take, the debate has centred on treatment versus prevention. Ideally, the best hope would be for a preventative vaccine, but that solution does not look promising. As one expert put it, "We are at the end of the beginning of this epidemic, not at the beginning of its end!"

The growth and exponential spread of information technology, coupled with the demise of the cold war, have, over the past decade, been determining factors in shaping our views on development and the global economy. With the advent of globalization, trade expanded, capital flowed, investments increased, economies liberalized and barriers to trade were lowered. In addition, the private sector took on a central role.

Unfortunately, as many have correctly observed, the number of countries and individuals excluded from the benefits of this phenomenon has risen inexorably. The attempt to explain this dichotomy has led to many troubling conclusions. For the poverty-stricken who live on $1 per day, talk of technology, economic growth, opportunity and prosperity is no more than nice-sounding words. Their greatest daily concern is the fear of not having enough to eat. Finding enough to eat is a daily challenge for more than three billion people on this planet. Despite the conflicts in Africa currently making headlines, it is the precarious existence of those left behind that has defined life on the African continent for more than two generations.

Whatever the reasons for this endemic poverty, the fact remains that unless we address the problem of poverty in all its aspects, we will not get to the roots of the problem. It is well known that millions of people in Africa and throughout the world are simply too poor to participate in the phenomenon of globalization and thus miss out on the benefits of globalization. The President of the World Bank has aptly put the issue of poverty in perspective:

> "... if you cannot deal with the question of poverty, if you cannot deal with the issue of equity, then you are not dealing with the question of peace."

He added:

> "We will not solve the problems of poverty or global peace or stability unless we change our perception of poor people from the objects of charity to an asset on which you can build a better world."

The persistence and spread of poverty hamper all efforts for peace, security, development, democracy and good governance. Peace and security require increasing and strengthening the United Nations capacity to prevent crises, to react to emerging threats and to implement peace-building programmes. In this regard, the Security Council has a preponderant role. It is obvious that our inability to reform the Council so that it can respond to the needs of the international reality of today can only diminish the legitimacy of its functioning and decisions.

During the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in September 1999, my President, Ismail Omar Guelleh, outlined a series of proposals on the re-establishment of peace in Somalia. A year later, during the fifty-fifth session, he related to this Assembly the extraordinary sacrifices and burdens borne by the Government and people of Djibouti, together with a

number of Governments and organizations of good will, to bring together the true representatives of the Somali people so that they might seize control of their own destiny and forge a new direction for their devastated country.

Ultimately, after eight months of intense and difficult negotiations at Arta, Djibouti, in August 2000, the Somali State was reborn through the establishment of the Transitional National Government, the National Assembly and other institutions. The course has not been easy, but the Transitional National Government has persisted and pursued its commitments, gaining the respect, sympathy and support of the international community, despite myriad attempts to undermine its efforts to achieve lasting peace.

The Transitional National Government is a reality. It represents the will of the people of Somalia, who have spoken and made their choice. As my President has repeatedly stated, if we wish to save Somalia from disintegration and chaos, we must eschew the standard practice of revolving around a few all-too-familiar individuals who held the Somali people hostage for a decade. He suggested, inter alia, that it was time to move beyond them, to restore power to the people, and for the Somali people to assume leadership and responsibility for their own destiny.

We are gratified that the Transitional National Government is fully committed to bringing about lasting peace in Somalia through a constructive spirit of dialogue and tolerance. Building upon the outcome of the Arta process, the Transitional National Government has consistently and tirelessly demonstrated its unwavering commitment to reconciling with its adversaries without preconditions. Its efforts to that end have been greatly appreciated by the Organization of African Unity and by the Security Council. Both entities have recently condemned those individuals and faction leaders who remain outside the Arta peace process and who stubbornly persist in blocking the peace efforts in Somalia.

In this respect, the efforts of the President of Kenya, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, earlier this month to bring some of these recalcitrants into the Arta process are to be strongly commended. That is what is expected of us; it is a moral and political duty we owe to the people of Somalia. That was the message of the Security Council's presidential statement on Somalia last month:

> "[T]he situation in Somalia and the objective of long-term regional stability can most effectively be addressed if neighbouring States play a positive role, including in the process of rebuilding national institutions in Somalia." (*S/PRST/2001/30, p. 2*)

While the Republic of Djibouti is not in the habit of challenging anyone on the veracity of information within their purview, it has nonetheless a moral duty to issue a caution about the source, motivation, accuracy, objectivity and reliability of such information, particularly as it relates to the crucial and sensitive issue of the existence of terrorist cells in one country or another. I am convinced that close consultation and cooperation with all countries in the region on this important issue will yield realistic and impartial information in the assessment of any particular situation. It must be pointed out, however, that haste and rash, uncorroborated conclusions will only harm the unity of the international coalition against terrorism, which we all vigorously support.

At a time when the attention of the international community is squarely focused on the issue of terrorism, the brutality and destructive force used against the Palestinians have increased dramatically. Israel has created the conditions for chaos and anarchy to justify its reoccupation and even annexation of Palestinian territory. The recent incursions represent the broadest military operations in years in Palestinian-controlled territory. Each day we drift closer to an unacceptable conflagration between two parties that are unequal in power, means, resources and international influence.

Insisting on a ceasefire without offering anything in return, Israel is determined to pursue its defiance of international opinion. Living conditions in the occupied territories continue to be seriously affected by the Israeli blockade. Rising unemployment, failing businesses, falling incomes, restrictions on the movement of goods and people and the banning of construction while Jewish settlement activities continue all combine to inflame an already incendiary situation. One wonders, therefore, what more the Israelis want to hear than the imploring words of President Arafat: "Let us go back to implementing the accords. Let us go back to saving the peace process with no conditions and no military pressures."

We call on Israel to relinquish Orient House and other Palestinian offices in and around Jerusalem. We also urge it to return to the negotiating table and, among other things, to implement the proposals contained in the Mitchell Committee report. Israel must release the millions of dollars in tax money owed to the Palestinian Authority in order to alleviate the economic and financial hardships inflicted upon the Palestinian people.

In the final analysis, Israel's security largely depends on the implementation of the principle of a viable Palestinian State. We hope that the international community will also commit itself to restoring dignity and respect to the Palestinian people. Like all peoples everywhere, they have a right to live in peace and to enjoy a decent existence.

In our subregion of the Horn of Africa, there has been some reduction in hostilities despite lingering differences and antagonisms. The people in that area of the world have suffered too long and desire nothing more than a relaxation of tensions, the free movement of people and goods, lasting peace, stability, development and cooperation. It is high time that we devoted our meagre resources to development and to improving the living conditions and meeting the needs of our own people. Let us give our people a break and a better future.

Djibouti truly believes in regional cooperation, good-neighbourliness and the opportunities they can afford for all our people. We are committed to working hand in hand with our friends in the subregion to resolve outstanding issues in complete harmony and trust. As a nation, we are challenged by scant resources and declining international assistance, which have been exacerbated by the huge influx of drought-affected people and economic migrants. Our capital city, in particular, is overburdened by an influx of people displaced by drought or political tensions in the region, thus further straining our limited infrastructure and social services. We appeal to the international community to help us overcome these unsustainable challenges and pressures that have been with us for too long and are beyond our limited means.

Mr. Ping (Gabon) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to begin by congratulating the President on his outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. His election reflects the recognition by the international community of the place and the role that the Republic of Korea, a great friend of Gabon, plays in the world and particularly in Asia. I would like to assure him of our full cooperation during his period of office.

To his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, I express the satisfaction of my delegation for the excellent work done in the course of the last session.

And to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, I would like to reaffirm the highest appreciation of the Government and the head of State of Gabon, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, for the dedication and determination with which he has endeavoured to make a reality of the ideals of peace, justice and welfare contained in the United Nations Charter. The Nobel Peace Prize, which has just been awarded to him as well as to the United Nations, is eloquent testimony to the work being done by the United Nations system to promote peace and build a more prosperous world. He can rest assured of Gabon's support for his efforts in the service of the United Nations.

It is little more than a year ago that the heads of State and Government of the Member States of the United Nations met here in New York at the historic Millennium Summit. On that occasion, they laid down the guidelines for the future work of the international community and reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of our Organization. The Millennium Summit thus enabled our nations to renew their commitment to act in unity and solidarity in order to take up the numerous challenges facing the world.

The tragedy which took place on 11 September 2001 in the United States of America has, more than ever, strengthened our determination to combat international terrorism. We must put an end to it by all possible means — military, diplomatic and political. It is for this reason that Gabon unreservedly supports Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) as well as the adoption of a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

There is no possible doubt that the coalition which has been created will be victorious in the fight against terrorism. In this surge of solidarity, the international community must, in parallel, find appropriate responses to the world problems that can serve as a pretext for certain radical groups. There is an urgent need to act to find solutions to the conflicts and economic and social problems of our time.

As far as armed conflicts are concerned, we are convinced that if illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons could be ended, it would be easier to arrive at a prompt and lasting settlement. The implementation by everyone of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York last July, would enable us to reach that goal.

Faithful to the commitment of President Omar Bongo, Gabon remains committed to and involved in efforts to restore peace in the world, particularly in Africa. Here, I would like to express our satisfaction at the return of peace to Congo (Brazzaville) following a national dialogue involving all parties, under the auspices of the international mediator. The stability which has been restored to this brother country has made possible the voluntary return of the numerous Congolese refugees from my country to their homes since August, thanks to excellent cooperation between the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Gabonese authorities and the Congolese authorities. Similarly, we welcome the significant progress that has been made in the Burundi peace process, which on 1 November 2001 culminated in the establishment of a transitional government.

I would like to pay deserved tribute to former President Nelson Mandela for the dedication and determination with which he conducted the process to that important stage. For his part, the President of the Gabonese Republic will, at the request of the members of the Burundi Peace Initiative, pursue his efforts with a view to consolidating the peace process in that country.

Concerning the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we welcome the important efforts already undertaken in establishing the United Nations peacekeeping mission. We earnestly hope that the Johannesburg phase will make possible the start of an effective inter-Congolese dialogue.

The situation in the Middle East, because of the threat it presents to international peace and security, is also a source of deep concern. I therefore urge the parties to resume negotiations, the only way to arrive at a lasting peace.

At the very moment when the process of globalization of financial markets and trade is affecting every aspect of the life of our societies, one must recognize that an ever-growing number of the world's peoples risk being marginalized if concrete measures are not taken on their behalf. The international community therefore needs to mobilize new and additional resources to enable them to narrow considerably the gap separating them from others. The forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled for March 2002 at Monterrey, Mexico, accordingly arouses great hopes. If this important conference is well prepared, it will help us to satisfy these legitimate expectations.

Leaders have understood that Africa holds the key to its own development. The creation of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development are part of this logic. Much remains to be done for development to blossom, but the foundations have already been laid. To achieve full success, however, Africa needs the assistance of the United Nations and the international community.

Another question vital to our planet's future at the beginning of the third millennium is that of the protection and preservation of the environment. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, which is to be held in Johannesburg from 2 to 11 September 2002, will provide us a further opportunity to evaluate the progress made in implementing policies reflecting the commitments we undertook in Rio de Janeiro 10 years ago. What conclusions will we be able to draw as to the implementation of Agenda 21? What chance of success will we be prepared to give the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, and the Convention on Biodiversity? In other words, what we must do is to respond more simply and directly to the issue of the choices and concessions we are prepared to make to be able to pass on to future generations a preserved environment that is similar to the heritage we ourselves received from our fathers.

Any efforts made by the countries of Africa to ensure better economic growth will be in vain if no large-scale effort is mounted against such diseases as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and, not to be forgotten, arterial hypertension, which is another of the main causes of death in Africa. There is therefore an urgent need to implement the United Nations recommendations on AIDS, particularly with regard to care, support and treatment. There is also an urgent

need to make operational the special Trust Fund created for that purpose.

At a time when the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council — the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of peace in the world — is increasingly called upon to take on the numerous challenges posed by the third millennium, the matter of reforming that body continues to be highly relevant. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive how a continent like Africa can be without permanent representation on the Council.

The reality of today's world, divided between universalism and particular interests and identities, clearly illustrates that humanity is still searching for harmony and unity. That is why we are firmly convinced that a solution to the concerns I have just mentioned is to be found in the international community's promotion of the virtues of dialogue and solidarity, which are the pillars of the new humanism. Without respect for those values, the dream cherished by the founders of our Organization to build a peaceful and united world will remain a chimera. Working towards establishing a new humanity free from selfishness, hatred, passions and injustice must constitute our common concern.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Arafat (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session. I would also like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to a second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I also wish to congratulate him and the United Nations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

It is important for me to be here today at this meeting, which is being held in very critical and important circumstances in the aftermath of the horrific, criminal and ugly terrorist acts against the cities of New York and Washington, D.C., on 11 September 2001. We strongly condemn those acts. In this context, I would once more like to extend our deepest and warmest sympathy to President George W. Bush and to the Government and the friendly people of the United States. In particular, I wish to express my condolences to the families of the victims.

The Palestinian people have expressed their readiness to confront all forms and manifestations of international terrorism, including State-organized terror, in order to build a new world that guarantees justice, peace, security and freedom for all peoples — a new world based on human rights and international legality. We call on all nations to coordinate their efforts within the framework of the United Nations and international legality and the need to pursue and encourage a dialogue between all nations, religions and civilizations.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to President George W. Bush for the declaration contained in the statement he made yesterday with regard to the need to achieve a just peace based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the basis of a two-State solution — Israel and Palestine — and with regard to expeditiously resuming the peace process. For our part, we will exert every possible effort to achieve those objectives. We have worked to provide the best possible conditions for that endeavour, and we will continue to do so.

I would also like to salute, and extend my appreciation to, all my brothers who have preceded me and clearly and eloquently made references to the question of the Palestinian people and their right to realize their legitimate rights under international legality.

Last year I had the honour of addressing the United Nations Millennium Summit. Today I am once again addressing the Assembly, bringing the pain of the Palestinian people and their just cause, which still awaits a just solution. As Members will recall, in 1947 the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (III), which provided for the partition of Palestine into two States — one Jewish and the other Palestinian. But the Palestinian State has still not been recognized by the United Nations. The Palestinian people faced tremendous historic injustice, and the majority of them were uprooted from their homes and made refugees.

The Palestinian people continue to seek their rights to self-determination and return — rights that today form the backbone of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international

law and international humanitarian law and that should be exercised on the Palestinian national soil. Members are aware that we have accepted the solution provided for by international legality. Yes, we have accepted less than 25 per cent of historic Palestine, while the General Assembly granted us almost 50 per cent of historic Palestine, as provided for in resolution 181 (III). On this new approach, we went to the Madrid Peace Conference, which was based on the principle of "land for peace" and which had the objective of implementing all relevant international resolutions related to Palestine, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) concerning the Palestinian refugees. Then we signed the Oslo Agreement at the White House in Washington, D.C., in the presence of and witnessed by representatives of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union, China, Japan, Egypt, Jordan and other countries, including Arab, African, Asian and Latin America States.

Later we signed a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding. After the assassination of my late partner, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin — my partner in the peace process — consecutive Israeli Governments clearly took the path of non-compliance and did not implement Israel's obligations stemming from the signed agreements. This impeded our sincere efforts to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace — the peace of the brave. The number of settlements and settlers has doubled since the start of the peace process. This reflects the lack of seriousness of the Israeli Government and its lack of commitment to the agreements signed between us.

Then came Sharon's visit to the holy sanctuary in Holy Jerusalem. I had personally and officially warned the Israeli Government of the grave consequences that would have on the peace process and the region. This action sparked the Palestinian intifada, reflecting the rejection by the Palestinian people of the Israeli Government's non-compliance with the agreements signed, the settlement policies, which deepen the occupation rather than end it by withdrawing from the occupied Palestinian territory, and its policies of undermining our Christian and Muslim Holy Places.

The current Israeli Government continues the aggression against the Palestinian people begun by the previous Government. State terror is being practised against the Palestinian people and land, using the might of the Israeli army, including F-15s, F-16s, Apache helicopters, tanks, missiles, armoured vehicles, navy vessels and lethal weapons, including those that are internationally banned. Practices of the Israeli army also include the assassination of Palestinian political leaders, the demolition of homes, the destruction of private and government institutions, ruining farms and fields and uprooting hundreds of thousands of olive and fruit trees, as well as the killing of women, children and the elderly. There have been approximately 1,800 Palestinians killed and 37,000 wounded. Many of them have been handicapped for life. Thousands have been arrested in only 13 months.

It should also be noted that the Palestinian economy has been devastated. The losses amount to $7 billion as a result of all forms of economic, financial, medical and food closures and sieges imposed on all the Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. These practices continue to restrict the movement of goods and people, including students and teachers who are prevented from reaching their schools and universities. All these acts of closure and siege have recently been tightened. Our international borders, checkpoints and airports have been closed. All these measures violate outright basic human rights. Workers have also been prevented from reaching their work places, their means to sustain their families and children.

Facing this aggression, escalation and the bloody war of State terror being waged by the Israeli Government against our people, land, Holy Places, — Jerusalem in particular — and Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Hebron and other Palestinian towns, the incursion into our cities, villages and refugee camps with tanks and the brutal massacres committed in various locations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, we call on the international community, as represented by all present, and on the peace-, freedom- and justice-loving people who defend human rights and dignity throughout the world to work sincerely and resolutely and to exert all possible efforts to stop this war of aggression and to send international observers to protect our people from the occupation, terror and ethnic cleansing practised by Israel and to supervise the implementation and the consolidation of the ceasefire, by which we are abiding and which has been consistently violated by the Israeli Government.

International sponsorship of the Middle East peace process is the only true guarantee for efforts by

the international community to make peace an established reality in our region. The absence of international involvement in this conflict — in the serious search for a solution to the Palestinian question, in accordance with justice and the principles of international law — will push the region back into a spiral of violence, confrontation and bloodshed and could make the situation more explosive and fragile.

Therefore, I call upon the international community to redouble its sincere efforts to end the current situation and the escalating crisis that, in the absence of the peace process, threatens to explode, with grave consequences for our region. The active involvement of the international community and the influential Great Powers is essential to save the peace process and to put it back on the right track, to move it forward sincerely, resolutely and effectively. Lasting peace will not be achieved or sustained without international legality to provide an effective and binding international mechanism to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The accurate and honest implementation of these resolutions will establish and sustain peace and will prevent bloodshed in our region.

Proceeding from our belief in peace as an irreversible strategic choice of our people, we have cooperated fully and positively with all international efforts and initiatives, including the Egyptian-Jordanian initiative, the Tenet Understandings and the Mitchell Report, which we accepted as a comprehensive, integrated package. We have also unilaterally declared an immediate comprehensive ceasefire, and we have exerted maximum efforts to sustain that ceasefire. On the eve of the Jewish New Year, we initiated the Palestinian call for peace, offered our sincere congratulations to the Israeli people and called upon them to make the New Year an occasion for a new era of peace, security and peaceful coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and the peoples of the whole Middle East region. We made very clear and unequivocal our strategic commitment to peace, negotiations and the political solution to all outstanding issues between us and the Government of Israel.

Most regrettably, the Israeli Government instructed its war generals and army to escalate the military campaign against our people, cities, villages and refugee camps. This included the buffer zones and the siege that closed off wide areas of cities, villages and cultivated lands and led to the destruction of our farms and the uprooting of thousands of trees in various places in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Allow me to extend my deepest appreciation and to salute sincerely all the brotherly, friendly nations and to the Great Powers that have realized today, more than ever before, that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, is the only guarantee for peace, security and stability in the region and the world. This constitutes a basic cornerstone in establishing and sustaining that peace.

We call upon these nations, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, the Russian Federation, France, China, Japan, the members of the European Union and the non-aligned countries, the international community, individually and collectively, to exert every possible effort to translate this vision into action and political reality in order to enable the Palestinian people to live in peace, dignity, freedom, independence and sovereignty within their independent State on their national soil, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital. This can be achieved by bringing Israel, the occupying Power, to withdraw fully from all of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem, to the boundaries of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the principles of the Madrid Peace Conference, to end settlement activities and evacuate settlers from our land, and to guarantee the right of return to the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which provided for this right and called for compensation to those not wishing to return.

We welcome the positive positions taken by President George W. Bush and other leaders who have called for the establishment of a Palestinian State. We believe this constitutes a significant step towards ending the conflict and establishing peace in the Middle East. I will say candidly to you that reviving and completing the peace process will need a new qualitative push, and after all that has happened it will not be possible to confine ourselves to interim solutions. It is impossible, of course, to achieve another interim agreement, as called for by some. To control the situation on the ground and to get the situation back to the way it existed before 28 September 2000 requires clear political imagination and new hope.

What the peace process now requires to achieve a just and lasting peace is a genuine effort on the part of the co-sponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation — as well as influential international actors, including the European Union, and of course the Arab and Muslim countries and other friendly nations in the Non-Aligned Movement as well as in the United Nations. All of them should immediately introduce a comprehensive framework for a permanent final solution based on international legality and the agreements signed so that both parties can negotiate expeditiously the details of that permanent solution. This, of course, should be preceded by the full and immediate implementation of the Mitchell Report and the Tenet Understandings.

It is clear that we are in need of greater international efforts, including an international presence on the ground, to help the parties move forward. In any case, the United Nations and the Secretary-General must carry out their natural and important roles in this regard so that we can achieve our desired peace objectives. I call upon the Israeli Government and the Israeli people to respond positively to this approach so that we can together build peace in the land of peace, the Holy Land of peace — the Holy Land; I repeat, the Holy Land.

Needless to say, we need an expeditious effort that brooks no further delay, especially at the current international situation. We are ready to carry out our share of responsibility. We trust you are also ready to shoulder your share of responsibility. I realize that the international community, after the assassination of my partner, Yitzhak Rabin, is looking forward to the peace process. From here I convey to the Israeli people my full commitment to the peace process, which I began with my late partner Yitzhak Rabin, and my partner Shimon Peres, a peace that guarantees freedom, stability and security for the Israelis and the Palestinians and all the peoples in the Middle East region — the peace of the brave; the just and comprehensive and lasting peace that will end the Israeli occupation of all the Palestinian and Arab territories and will lead to the establishment of the independent Palestinian State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital.

This is what we should be working for, for the sake of our children and their children. From here I call upon the Israeli Government to resume the final status negotiations in order to implement the resolutions of international legality and the agreements signed.

I salute all of you and hope that this session will produce the required solutions and recommendations which will enable our peoples and our nations and the whole of humanity to live in peace, stability, progress and prosperity.

May peace and God's blessing be with you.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.